



Cal EMA
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Secretary Bettenhausen Announces \$3.3 million grant to Combat the Flow of Illegal Guns into Mexico

SAN DIEGO - California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) Secretary Matthew Bettenhausen announced the release of a \$3.3 million grant to fund a new Firearms Trafficking Task Force this week, enabling multiple agency coordination to combat the illegal trafficking of firearms and ammunition across the California and Mexico border.

The \$3.3 million, three year grant, funded through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will create a partnership task force between the California Department of Justice, the California Highway Patrol, San Diego County Sheriff's Department and Imperial County Sheriff's Department. This task force will work directly with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in identifying and disrupting the criminal organizations responsible for the escalating violence in Mexico.

"This task force will allow law enforcement to work collaboratively, to share information and pursue prosecutions," stated Secretary Bettenhausen. "We must stop the escalation of illegal firearms trafficking across our border and the subsequent violent crime it creates. These illegal firearms are landing in the hands of gangs, violent criminals and drug cartels, who are using them to commit more crime, including the assassination of law enforcement personnel."

The task force will combat the illegal firearms trafficking networks that use California and other States to purchase and transport firearms and ammunition. According to the most recent ATF trace data, 11,492 of the 30,641 firearms traced and recovered in the United States in 2008 originated in California. Also in 2008, 968 of the 14,005 crime guns recovered in Mexico were traced to California sources.

Stopping the flow of illegal guns into Mexico has been a priority for the Schwarzenegger Administration. Last year, the Governor led the effort to establish a formal partnership between the U.S. and Mexico Border Governors and the ATF to identify the illegal sources of weapons and bring gun traffickers and other violent criminals to justice.

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